

## ADHESIVE LABELING SYSTEM AND METHOD

### DESCRIPTION

[Para 1] The present invention relates generally to adhesive identification labels. More specifically, it relates to a combination sealing and labeling method for use with packing materials such as cardboard boxes and the like.

[Para 2] The storage of items is a frequently occurring task. Items may need to be stored for archival purposes, for safekeeping and most commonly, for moving the items, whether for residential moving, office moving, for warehousing or for many other purposes. These items are normally packed into boxes or containers for storage regardless of the purpose of the storage. These containers are typically corrugated cardboard boxes, although plastic storage containers are becoming more prevalent, particularly when moisture or other environmental considerations are of concern.

[Para 3] One problem with storing the items into boxes or other containers is identification of those items. This problem has been dealt with previously by a number of different techniques. One tried and true method is to simply scrawl the identity of the contents with a marker on the outside of the container. However, this type of labeling on the outside of the container is often hard to decipher, becomes faded over time, labeling is needed on all sides of the container, and is easily obscured. Also, if the container is reused, it may become confusing due to the previous labeling.

[Para 4] Another technique is to print labels that identify the contents. These labels must be either pre-printed or printed on the spot. This requires some sort of label printing hardware and software, and is almost always inconvenient. The labels must be sorted, and applied in a location that is easily located on the container.

[Para 5] These techniques are also difficult to apply to containers that may have surfaces, such as plastic, that are difficult to write on with markers, or are difficult for the adhesion of labels. Since many containers are formed of such

materials for environmental considerations or for the ability to reuse, this has become an increasing problem.

[Para 6] The present invention solves these and other problems by providing a combination labeling and sealing apparatus that may be used with a variety of different containers.

### [Para 7] Summary of the Invention

[Para 8] The present invention provides a system for labeling containers that also enables the containers to be sealed. This system enables the containers to be properly labeled during the packing process without the need for markers, labels or other extraneous devices.

[Para 9] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the system utilizes adhesive packaging tape that has pre-printed indicia for labeling the contents of the container. The indicia may indicate the room where the contents are to be unpacked, the room where the contents were originally packed, the actual contents of the container or any other indicia that may be relevant to the contents of the container.

[Para 10] The labeling tape in one preferred embodiment includes the same indicia repeated on the same roll of tape. The user simply uses that roll for contents to be labeled under that indicia, then another roll with different indicia for contents to be labeled under the different indicia.

[Para 11] In another preferred embodiment, different indicia are printed at intervals on the same roll of tape. This allows one roll to be used for indicating different contents or rooms.

[Para 12] Another system under a preferred embodiment of the present invention provides color coding to indicate the contents of the container. The tape includes either a background color with indicia printed over it, or simply a color coding tape with no printed indicia. The system may also include a key mechanism for matching the color with the contents.

**[Para 13]** The present invention in another embodiment provides graphical representations for indicating the contents of the container. This allows small children or individuals not familiar with the language of the indicia to determine the contents of the container.

**[Para 14]** These and other features of the present invention will be evident from the ensuing description of preferred embodiments and from the drawings.

#### **[Para 15] BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

**[Para 16]** Figure 1 is a perspective view of a preferred embodiment of a label sealing tape of the present invention.

**[Para 17]** Figure 2 is an alternative embodiment of the present invention.

**[Para 18]** Figure 3 is an alternative embodiment of the present invention indicating color coding indicia.

**[Para 19]** Figure 4 is another embodiment of the present invention that provides graphical representations of the indicia.

**[Para 20]** Figure 5 is a cross sectional view of the embodiment of Figure 1 with the corresponding layers of the label identified.

**[Para 21]** Figure 6 is a detail view of an alternative preferred embodiment of the invention.

#### **[Para 22] DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE**

#### **[Para 23] PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

**[Para 24]** The present invention provides a combination sealing and labeling apparatus for use with storage and moving containers. Preferred embodiments of the present invention are described below. It is to be expressly understood that these exemplary embodiments are provided for descriptive purposes only and are not meant to unduly limit the scope of the present inventive concept. Other embodiments and variations of these

embodiments are considered within the present inventive concept as set forth in the claims herein. The present invention is described for use with containers such as cardboard boxes or other moving and/or storage containers. It is to be expressly understood that other types of containers or other uses are contemplated for use with the present invention as well.

**[Para 25]** A preferred embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in Figures 1 – 3. The adhesive label sealing tape 10, of a preferred embodiment of the present invention, includes an adhesive layer 20 on one side. The label sealing tape 10 also has an outwardly facing area 30 on the opposing surface of the tape from the adhesive layer. The adhesive label sealing tape 10 has width sufficient to span a seam, such as one formed between two opposing edges of a cardboard box, and seal the contents inside the container. Typical widths of the preferred embodiment of the present invention range from one-half inch to four inches. However, it is to be expressly understood that other dimensions may be included under the present invention.

**[Para 26]** The outwardly facing area 30 on the label sealing tape 10 includes pre-printed indicia 32. The pre-printed indicia in this preferred embodiment provides an indication as to the item contents contained within the container 50. For example, in the illustrative embodiment shown in Figure 1, the indicia 32 on the label sealing tape 10 includes the phrase “Kitchen” recurring periodically at intervals on the tape 10. This indicates that the contents of the container 50 include kitchen items. Additional label sealing tape rolls include additional indicia, such as “Bathroom”, “Bedroom”, etc.

**[Para 27]** In use, the individual packing the containers would use the appropriate roll of tape 10 to seal the container. The appropriate indicia is easily visible so that the contents are known. The container is also sealed from accidental spillage or damage. Alternatively, the individual could simply place a strip of the tape at visible portions of the container.

**[Para 28]** The entire roll of label sealing tape could include the same phrase repeated at periodic intervals, or in another preferred embodiment, it could include a series of indicia that may be used for related containers, as

shown in Figure 2. For example, the roll of label sealing tape 10 could include the phrase "Kitchen" repeated along a four foot length, then the phrase "Bathroom" repeated along a four foot length, then the phrase "Bedroom" repeated along a four foot length, then another phrase and so on. Different rolls of label sealing tape could include related phrases for different types of container storage, including workshop, office, etc. The tape could be pre-perforated at the appropriate intervals to assist in the process.

**[Para 29]** Different embodiments of the label sealing tape may be created for different types of uses. For example, indicia may be printed to indicate the contents of a room, then the room may be identified, i.e., Master Bedroom, Master Bathroom, Kitchen, etc. However, other embodiments may be specific to related items, i.e., Tools, Dishes, Books, etc.

**[Para 30]** Another alternative of the preferred embodiment is the use of color-coding the tape. An example of this embodiment is illustrated in Figure 3. Different colors may indicate different contents. For example, the tape for the Kitchen may be colored red, the tape for the Bedroom may be blue, etc. Also, the color-coding may be used alone or in combination with text. The system may also include a key to allow the colors to be matched with the contents.

**[Para 31]** In an alternate embodiment, the label sealing tape may include alphanumeric coding, color-coding or other types of indicia that may be matched up on an inventory list. This enables the contents of each container to be uniquely identified and maintained in accordance with the inventory list. Bar codes could also be provided on the label sealing tape to provide the ability to scan and monitor the location of the containers.

**[Para 32]** Also, in another alternative embodiment shown in Figure 4, graphical representations of the contents of the containers can also be used on the label sealing tape. This may be desirable for use with children who do not have reading skills. For example, representations of toys can be used for containers that are to be used for storing toys, clothes could be used for containers that are to be used for storing clothes, etc.

**[Para 33]** Figure 5 shows a cross sectional view of the label in a preferred embodiment. In this embodiment, the label 10 has a continuous adhesive layer 20 bonded to the side opposite the side where the indicia may be placed 30. This adhesive layer has sufficient bonding capacity to firmly secure to typical container material surfaces, including but not limited to plastic, rubber, cardboard, and various types of metal.

**[Para 34]** In another alternative preferred embodiment as shown in Figure 6, the indicia is written by the user of the label after the contents have been stored inside the container and the label has been placed on the outside of the container. The label sealing tape includes an area 40, as shown in Figure 4, that is able to be written on with either an ordinary marker, or a marker 50 provided for this purpose. The area for receiving indicia is large enough to accommodate a number of different words to facilitate numerous possibilities of descriptions.

**[Para 35]** It is to be expressly understood that other types of indicia may be used as well. For example, symbols, colors, numbers or graphical representations of objects are contemplated for use with the present invention in one preferred embodiment.

**[Para 36]** In use, the container 50 is packed with related items for storage, moving or any other purpose. Once the container has been packed, the top or lid is closed. A section of label sealing tape 10 that has the appropriate indicia for indicating the contents of the container is selected and applied across the seam of the container to seal the container. Later, the appropriate container can be selected by identifying the contents by the indicia 32.

**[Para 37]** These and other embodiments are not meant to limit the scope of the claims. These and other variations are considered to be within the scope of the claimed invention.

